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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/834,373	04/13/2001	Nathaniel J. Fisch		4062
7590	12/16/2003		EXAMINER	
Nathaniel J. Fisch 105 Fitzrandolph Road Princeton, NJ 08540				QUARTERMAN, KEVIN J
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	2879

DATE MAILED: 12/16/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>
	09/834,373	FISCH ET AL.
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>
	Kevin Quartermann	2879

-- *In MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the corresponding address --*  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION

**EXTENSION OF TIME FOR COMMUNICATION.**

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

1)  Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 August 2003.

2a)  This action is **FINAL**.                            2b)  This action is non-final.

3)  Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## **Disposition of Claims**

4)  Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6)  Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.  
7)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

9)  The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)  The drawing(s) filed on 29 August 2003 is/are: a)  accepted or b)  objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)  The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120**

12)  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a)  All b)  Some \* c)  None of:  
1.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3.  Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a))

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

13)  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

a)  The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

14)  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

**Attachment(s)**

1)  Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2)  Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3)  Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_ .  
4)  Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_ .  
5)  Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)  
6)  Other:

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Drawings***

1. Applicant's corrected drawing for Figure 4 received on 29 August 2003 is acceptable.

### ***Double Patenting***

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).
3. A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).
4. Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).
5. Claims 1-20 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of U.S. Patent No.

6448721. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Instant Application</b>	<b>US 6448721</b>	<b>Discussion of Differences</b>
Claims 1-3, 17, and 19	Claim 15	The patent claims a ceramic channel, while the application claims the channel made of an insulator material. Ceramic is an insulative material.
Claims 4, 7-8, 10, and 12-14	Claim 16	The patent claims the emissive electrode segments placed along the channel, while the application claims the electrode segments arranged in pairs around the inner and outer channel radii. This is an obvious variation of the invention claimed in the patent.
Claims 5-6, 9, 11, and 15-16	Claim 17	The patent does not claim the particular material of the electrode segments, but it is within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use of being emissive or non-emissive.
Claim 18	Claim 20	See discussion above for claim 1.
Claim 20	Claim 18	See discussion above for claim 1.

### ***Response to Arguments***

6. Applicant's arguments filed 29 August 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
7. In response to applicant's argument that the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,448,721 refers to a cylindrical geometry thruster while the instant application refers to a *conventional* annular geometry thruster, the Examiner submits that a cylindrical geometry is also annular, or shaped like a ring. The Examiner also notes that claim 14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,448,721 mentions an annular region in the thruster. Thus, the Examiner holds that the doctrine of double patenting, as applied above, is appropriate for the instant application.

***Conclusion***

8. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).
9. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

***Contact Information***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kevin Quarterman whose telephone number is (703) 308-6546. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8-4:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nimesh Patel can be reached on (703) 305-4794. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7382 for regular communications and (703) 308-7382 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

Kevin Quarterman  
Examiner  
Art Unit 2879

kq   
December 1, 2003



Nimesh Patel  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 2879